

THE ARAB AT HOME

6A
622 individual Arab is free to transfer his allegiance to another chieftain if he so desires. Such a transfer quite frequently takes place. In a loose general way each tribe

63
233 has certain areas over which it grazes its camels and its goats and sheep. In proportion to the number of animals the area covered is enormous, for throughout the hot, dry summer months locations must be frequently changed and new pastures found. The prosperity of the desert Arab, poor as it is at the best, depends on a rainfall so scanty that one marvels at the existence of any life at all.

311 There are whole districts, like the Great Southern Desert
132 and the black plain encountered between Hasa and Riyadh,
135 where not even the hardest Bedouin attempts to live. In winter the temperature goes down so low that frost is seen, and in the summer the country glows with heat like a furnace. No mineral resources are known at present, and there is no reason to suppose that the most careful scientific search would find any.

233 Bedouins who live in the desert own a certain number
422 of camels, and turn them out to graze over large areas.

Camels require little water and can go for three days, if necessary, without a drink, an ability which adds enormously to their value in a country where it is frequently necessary to travel scores of miles to find a well. The camel is the one support of Bedouin life. Camel's milk is
262 the principal article of diet, with a few dates for a desert and camel's meat as an addition for feasts and high

• 291 days. The hair of the camel furnishes clothes, and his
4A2 back affords the only method of transportation possible
231 in the desert. Indeed the Arab looks on the camel as God's special gift to the desert nomad, and he is not far mistaken.

000 Where wells are somewhat close together and the for-

Ex. Houston D-6 (1913-1920) 1924
Bedouin in Syria

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291



NOMAD BEDOUINS

Facing p. 294

THE ARAB AT HOME

mere trifle. Probably the only part of the outfit that would have any commercial value at all is the black goat's-hair tent, which affords a poor shelter from the cold in winter and from the heat in summer. And along with extreme poverty there goes an astonishing lack of any sense of cleanliness or order. The tent of a Bedouin could be little more disorderly if it were taken by some giant hand, shaken like a dice box, and the contents allowed to rest where they fell. The furniture consists of few things and poor. There are the remnants of one or more cotton stuffed quilts. These are both bed and bed clothes. There are a few skins to hold drinking water and a few skin basins. Some shaped sticks are tied together to make camel saddles. The outfit will also include a copper kettle for the cooking of food, a battered coffee pot for the making of coffee and usually a wooden bowl. This bowl, which may be the only eating utensil belonging to the household, has probably never been washed in its history. At times milk is drunk out of it, and at times rice and meat are eaten from it. The grease with which it is covered has long since exceeded the absorption limit of the wood and for years has been plastered on to the outside. Under such circumstances the prevalence of disease excites no wonder; the wonder is that many maintain excellent health.

The Bedouins clothes are a loin cloth beneath and shirt above, which shirt resembles a loose nightgown and reaches to his ankles. Over this is worn an old disreputable aba or cloak, in cut resembling nothing so much as a college gown. All of these are usually in a state of great disrepair and show an acute need of laundering.

The town Arabs, who look with scorn on the desert Bedouin, assert that when he buys a new undershirt, he puts

THE BEDOUIN OF THE DESERT 25

309 it on over his old one, and since none of his garments are
391 ever removed, the older garment gradually falls to pieces
and after a while disappears altogether. This story, like
much of the fiction of the world, though not strictly ac-
[515] curate is based on painful truth, for baths are not so fre-
[296] quent in the Bedouin's life as they should be, and the
laundering of clothes is still less adequate.

515 But it is easy to blame the Bedouin for being dirty.
312 Dirty he certainly is and his clothes even more so, but
what is to be expected when water is so scarce that for
lack of it animals frequently go thirsty, and sometimes
even men? We forget that cleanliness is a luxury, and
a very expensive luxury at that. Through the summer
227 the Bedouin women wash their hair in camel's urine be-
302 cause water is so precious that it cannot be wasted for
312 such a purpose. The men apparently go without wash-
95 ing. Clothes require no comment, for their condition is
what might be imagined. By far the commonest hunt-
ing in Arabia is the hunt for wild game in the hair and
clothes. It is always successful. The ablutions required
783 before prayers are commonly performed with sand. The
515 delight of such people upon arriving at some place where
water is abundant and where bodies and clothes can be
washed is a good thing to see.

262 The diet of these desert Arabs is ordinarily very
frugal. A drink of camel's milk and a handful of dates
are a day's rations for an adult, and more is not expected.

[272] There will also be an occasional drink of coffee, of which
[414] the Bedouin is inordinately fond. Even the poorest Bed-
ouin tent will have some sort of a battered and worn
coffee pot for this purpose. Bread is a rare luxury in
such homes, and meat even a rarer one. A feeble old
camel on the verge of dissolution will render a last service

By Harbison D-4 (1913-1924) 1924 M1 M1000 EAC
Bedouin M54

1472
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BEDOUIN WOMEN

facing page 30

291
411



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A BEDOUIN SHEIKH

facing p. 158

True Bedu coffee is strong, brewed of milk or sugar, but
 flavoured with herbs; and its consumption is the occasion of much
 social activity—the winding off of the day, and an opportunity
 for discussion, and the reception of guests. For the Badawin,
 not for city dwellers, coffee is truly the 'wine of Islam', and the
 equipment of all Badawin households includes at least one carpet,
 which is spread before the hearth, a mortar, and coffee pots and cups.
 A few cooking pots, and one or two large trays and bowls for com-
 munal eating make up the remainder of the culinary equipment.

Clothing of the Badawin is simple. A long robe of thick material
 is the principal, sometimes in fact the only, garment. In winter a
 waterproof cloak of woven camel hair is worn. A voluminous
 headcloth, held in place by a rope or band, is wound round the head
 so as to give protection to the face and neck, and cowhide, beeline
 sandals are worn on the feet.

Water is usually too precious for much washing¹—indeed, the
 Koran permits the ceremonial use of sand in the daily ablutions which
 are enjoined on all Moslems—and animal urine is frequently used as a
 substitute. Badawin food is monotonous and scanty. Most im-
 portant are milk products: curds, buttermilk, various kinds of cheese
 —of which *ladi*, a kind of cream cheese, is the most widespread—
 and *samed*, or butter. In addition, wheat, barley, and occasionally
 a little rice are obtained by barter, blackmail, or brigandage from
 agriculturalists, or else grown very sporadically by the nomads them-
 selves.² Small amounts of dried fruit, usually dates, are also eaten.
 Meat is provided only as a great luxury, since animals themselves are
 in effect a kind of fixed capital—owners must live from the yield,
 not upon the animal itself. Apart, then, from occasions of high
 festival, when special slaughtering takes place, only those animals that
 die naturally are eaten.

Meals are served first to the older men of the tent, each man using
 his dagger as a knife, and fingers as a fork,³ after which, when they
 are satisfied, it is the turn of the younger men and boys. Later still
 come the women, and finally the girls—the sexes never intermingling
 during meals. On occasion when supplies are plentiful, the Badawin

¹ It has been said of a present-day certain Wahhabi wife of Arabia that all adult
 members have at least once in their lifetime been forced to eat on water taken from the
 hump of a camel.

² Patches of ground are roughly sown with grain, and later in the year tribesmen
 return to harvest the crop.

³ As far as possible, use of the left hand is avoided in polite Arab society—this hand
 is employed for menial and unpleasant tasks.

With the Tai' and Shammar Bedouins

hands and feet in a man,—in fact, his whole appearance 622
was arresting.

For a Bedouin, he had an unusually pale complexion, set off by a brilliantly black beard and raven locks. He 622
preferred to dress almost entirely in black. His Arab 291 ●
head-cloth, sandals, and soft camel-hair cloak were black, as well as the wide shawl wound round his waist. Even his mare was black, a rare thing, for most Bed- [25]
ouins hold black horses in disfavour. Headstalls, halter, saddle, and saddle-cloth—all were black, relieved only by delicate silver embroidery and a few silver ornaments. His silver-hilted sword, too, was carried in a black scabbard.

Sheykh Tai' was vain. He loved arms and horses, but above all he adored his little son, Farhan. According to Ali, he had not much affection for his wives, who were reputed to be beauties; but he was proud of them as he was of all his possessions—his great herds and extensive lands. 622
157

The Tai's Bedouins kept relatively few camels, but 233
large numbers of sheep and goat, which suffer much from the depredations of wolves in winter and spring. Sheykh Tai' told me that these nimble-footed robbers from the inaccessible retreats of the Turkish Mountains had come down again into the snow-free lowlands. They had already attacked exposed Bedouin camps and caused great damage, although the watchful herdsmen had been continually on guard.

Sheykh Tai' was, like Nimrod, a "great hunter before 224
the Lord", and liked nothing better than to be riding abroad. On the eighth evening after our arrival, he

Hunting and Warfare

443 stallions from various Bedouin tribes in the Euphrates.

Their kind is found everywhere in Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. Almost invariably the *Akhayl* hail from Anayza and Buraida, two large oasis-towns of Kasim in the heart of Arabia.

[437] During spring they¹ travel among the nomad Arabs and barter rice, coffee, sugar, arms, munitions, and gold for camels and colts. Bedouins have only begun to sell mares since the arrival of the automobile, which has displaced the horse for raiding purposes.

[443
177]

These traders travel unmolested throughout Arabia and they pay the *shaykh* of the tribe from which they purchase animals a small sum for the privilege of pursuing their business. Each trader has his own special tribe which he visits every year.

721 On the second day, when we came on some rain water left in the rocky hollows of a *wadi*, we decided to rest awhile and let our mares drink their fill. We had hardly dismounted when two strange Bedouins on horseback suddenly appeared. Ali jumped on his mare's back at once, and deserting me and our animals, galloped away in the opposite direction from which the Bedouins had come, obviously seeking cover.

"A *ghazu!*" he yelled, as he rode away.

The two strange Bedouins were armed. They were obviously not traders, as Ali had immediately perceived. More horsemen appeared and they began to fire at Ali and myself. My "Powerful" protector, ducking low over his horse's neck, made a comical picture. The hostile Bedouins were *Fid'an*, as I knew from their striped shepherd's cloaks. To defend ourselves was useless, as we

[29]

Arrival in Camp

Chap. II

^k
701 at Wafra, so I am going to enquire his reasons for being there. Ibn Shaja'an has the unsavoury reputation of being cruel and overbearing to the Badawin, and like so many of his type—though a Mutairi by origin—he has been bred in Hufuf, and has imbibed many of the harsh characteristics of his master, 'Abdullah bin Jiluwi.* It is a curious fact that cruelty, conceit and a generally objectionable manner often spoil the character of a tribesman who for any length of time lives in a town.

^k
132
291 We leave Kuwait at 12.30 p.m., and after a car run of 2½ hours we reach Araifjan. There is a cool *shamd* blowing, but in spite of moving with it, I need a sweater and *furwah* (sheepskin-lined, long Badawin cloth cloak with sleeves, fashionable among the 'Anizah and Northern Badawin). At 3 p.m. I catch the first glimpse of my camp. It is on the right of the rough track, and half a mile south of one of my previous camps of the year before.

^k
137 The tents are pitched among the thick 'arfaj bushes which are a feature of Araifjan. Everything, however, is dry, and except for a few *gaghraf* bushes (*hamdh*) which are in full bloom, there is nothing green to be seen at all. No, I am wrong, for in the salty patches there are splashes of emerald green *harm* (also one of the *hamdh* family) which show up strangely in the dry countryside.

^B
361 My camp of black hair tents is pitched in a long line, each tent facing south-east:

"A" is my tent; "B" that of my servant and huntsman; "C" is Salim's tent; "D" is Dhuwaihi's, the blind Azmi who resides with his two sons, Faláh and Násir (they are the shepherds); "E" is the tent of our *qasr* or neighbour, Sáleh, the Mutairi, who has asked permission to camp with Salim for a few days; "F" is my privy tent.

Very peaceful and quiet it all is—and I am not expected.

^B
352 Suddenly we are seen, and there is much running to and fro, and carrying of *dushaks* and camel saddles from the women's quarters of Salim's tent to mine. Carpets and *galims* are quickly unrolled, the tent partitions (*gáta*) are fixed in place, and by the time the car draws up in front of my tent, everything is ready to give me welcome.

* Bin Jiluwi died on 31st October, 1935. He was according to Arab standards an undoubtedly great man, and a man of extraordinary courage. He was one of the twenty-three paladins who helped to seize Riyadh with Bin Sa'ud when the latter won his kingdom, but he was unfortunately a man without a spark of softness or mercy in his make-up.

The Badawin's Diet

Chap. III

511 what the world would call honest methods. Hence if ne cannot live on somebody's largesse he must steal or raid. He cannot spin, to work [461] he is ashamed. If he is forbidden to raid (as is the case under Bin Sa'ud's regime to-day), the fight for life is a particularly severe one, when he is not provided with an occupation to enable him to earn. Year in, year out, the poorer type of Badawin—and there are many tens of thousands of such—never gets a "square" meal according to our standards. He probably has meat only when he can cadge it off somebody more fortunate than himself, or when his shaikh gives a dinner party.

262 His own food for most of the year consists of only camel's milk and a handful of dates per day. The camel-herd gets even less than this.

291 The Badawin's clothes are on the same scanty scale as his food, a thin cotton *dishdasha* (smock), replaced only when it falls off his back with age, and a threadbare 'abba (cloak), *kaffiyah* and thin rope *agd* (head cloth and head cord), are all he has to cover his ill-nourished body. Yet all this makes for toughness and hardihood, and the average

[132] Badawin seems made of steel. The lack of warm clothing is probably the hardest thing in life that he has to bear, for in winter the temperature often falls below freezing point, and the winds are of ice, and cut the body through and through. I have never in my life felt so cold as in the desert a hundred miles inland of Kuwait when a *yahi* or *jabali*

262 wind has been blowing in December or January. Yet in spite of the 574 hard life, the Badawin is never in danger of actual starvation or of dying from want. His *ahl* (family) would never permit this, nor would the system of affording three days' hospitality to all and sundry—such a splendid feature of democratic Arabia—allow of a man reaching such straits. A person who is down and out, without a penny to his name, would in reality be far worse off in London than in Arabia, where he could always hope to find a black tent or two to sponge on.

[181] A Badawin's dream and ambition in life is to possess about a dozen 231 camels, next a wife, and afterwards a mare, half a hundred sheep and a *salûqi*—I am, of course, assuming that he starts with a rifle and a *dhalûl* (riding camel). Give the desert man these essentials and he is a made man, for both camels and sheep double themselves in three years. Any male lambs that are born, he kills for food, the females he

Changing Camp

Chap. IV

342 it is, sand may be used for the necessary ablutions in place of water.
515 So the cleaner and more handy the sandy bed of the nullah, the happier
514 are the occupants of the tent.

The phrase "proximity of water" is used in a relative sense only. In summer it must, of course, be close, within at most half a mile, but preferably much closer. In winter, however, when camels are not watered at all, and sheep and mares drink only once in four days, camps may be pitched twenty or thirty miles from any well. The household water is brought out on camel-back and in large and small skins, whilst sheep are sent off to drink at the wells, or in exceptional circumstances have water brought to them on camels.

CHANGING THE CAMPING GROUND

515 For sanitary reasons the camping ground is changed every eight or
233 ten days, but especially to provide new grazing for the camels and sheep. An ordinary change of ground usually involves a march of ten or twelve miles, always provided water is handy. This is not in any sense a "migration", which will be described in a later chapter.

492 When it is time to move, tents are struck, and tents and other heavy material are loaded on to the male camels (*jamal*), which are stronger and more suited for the work than the females: lighter gear, spare water, etc., are placed on selected females, and of course the family
[291] themselves mount on riding camels, the women moving off sheltered in their *maksars* or *ginns*, the tops of which are canopied over with bright coloured woollen or cotton material, as a protection both from the eyes of men and from the sun. The men go before on their *dhalûls*. If an individual householder with half a dozen tents is changing ground, he himself heads the procession, while his sheep and milch camels either follow, grazing as they go on a flank or in the rear, or have already been sent on ahead. When nearing the new ground, the head of the house rides ahead, selects the site for the tents, makes his camel kneel *nawakh al dhalûl* and declares this to be the new camping ground.

701 If a whole tribe is changing ground the fighting men move out first
221 under their leader, all of them riding *dhalûls* and with mares and horses attached to their saddles by long leading ropes. Scouts (*sbâr*) have

Men's Clothes

Chap. V

492

- (r) *'Asa*—camel stick (made of cane).
- (s) *Bakira*—camel stick (cane).
- (t) *Miqada*—the small bag made of wool or leather for carrying money, *hail* or small quantities of dates when a man is travelling alone.
- (u) *Risan*—camel's halter.

FALCON'S GEAR

(See Chapter XXVIII on Hawking)

223

- (v) *Burqa*—hawk's hood.
- (w) *Wakar al tair*—hawk's stand.
- (x) *Dasma al tair*—falconer's glove.

NOTE.—Other articles of furniture connected with a *well-to-do* person's tent are the—352
Mattrah (plural: *mattarah*)—mattress for guests to sit on.
Mafrash—carpets to spread on floor.
We have also the various forms of firewood found in every tent, rich and poor 372
alike. These are known under the general terms of—

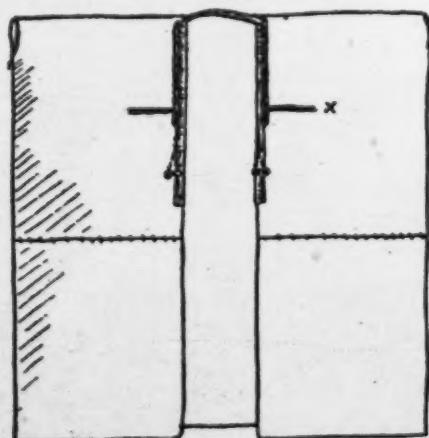
Jalla—camel dung.

Hamdh—a pungent-smelling bush giving a fine white ash.

'Arfa—a well-known bush found all over North-Eastern Arabia.

MEN'S CLOTHING

291



'ABBAH

'Abba or *Bisht*—made of finely woven sheeps' or camels' wool in two pieces. Texture can be superfine, thin, coarse or thick according to means of weaver. Round neck and down both fronts (shaded portion) is fine gold embroidery ending in a couple of tassels on both sides. The horizontal gold braid (x) indicates that the *'Abba* is of type worn by shaikhs of Kuwait. Colour—all shades of brown verging on to black.

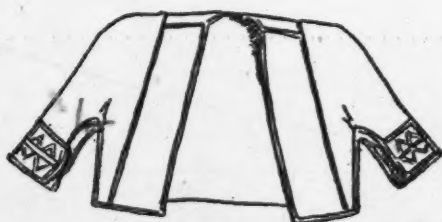
Men's Clothes

Chap. V

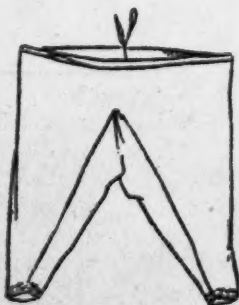
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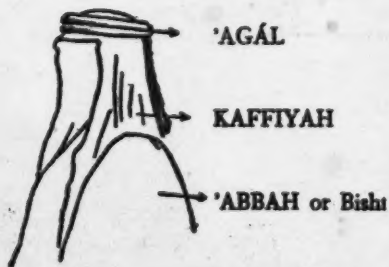
THAUB SHILLAHÁT



DÁMIR (black and gold)



SIRWÁL



Clothes and Weapons

Chap. V

291



Farwah—gaudy coloured and braided cloak for winter wear. Made of black and blue cloth picked out in scarlet, green, mauve or maroon cloth. Braiding is pale yellow and black. Inside of cloak there is a lining of black or white lamb skins, the former commonly preferred. An extremely warm and comfortable garment. Worn by shaikhs and well-to-do Badawin only.

Thaub Shillahdt—white smock with long, wide sleeves.

Dishdasha—similar to last, but with tight-fitting sleeves.

Zibin—a superior kind of *dishdasha*. It is open down the front from top to bottom and is so amply cut that one side folds over the other (dressing-gown fashion). The *zibin* is held in place by two pairs of little strings, one inside and the other outside.

Damir—sort of Zouave jacket in black and gold. Worn by men.

Sirwal—loose Badawin trousers worn by both men and women.

'Agal—the head-cord which holds the *kaffiyah* in position.

Kaffiyah—the head-cloth worn by Arab men.

DAGGERS

411

Khisa—dagger with single cutting edge, used for defence purposes and for cutting throat of gazelle, sheep, camels, etc.

Jiffar al khisa—scabbard for *khisa*.

Hudrdhi—miniature *khisa*, used for cutting throat of *hubara* and other game birds.

The *khisa* is affixed by buckle or stud on the inside of the belt bandolier; the *hudrdhi* is similarly fastened on the inside of the shoulder bandolier.

1: Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 . MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4



MUTLUQ AL SUR
A typical Mutairi Shaikh

page 122 a .

• 291



THE LATE HILLAL AL MUTAIRI
Pearl Merchant of Kuwait

page 122 b.

291 •



AMSHA

page 144a

CHAPTER IX

Women's Secrets

THE BADAWIN WOMEN'S CLOTHES

• ^B
291 ^K
291 Like her sisters the world over, the Badawin lass is vain and loves above everything to deck herself out in fine clothes. Though she has not the same opportunity as her town sister of showing off her finery, she still manages to attract in her modest way. Let me enumerate her various garments and give a short description of each.

Thaub—The black cotton overgarment.

Dishdasha—Long-sleeved dress of coloured cotton, flannelette or silk worn under the *thaub*.

Sirwal—The long coloured cotton trousers, tied with a cord round the waist and fitting close above the ankle.

'Abba—Black woollen cloak, generally bound round the edge with black silk, which is worn by every Badawin woman outside her tent if men are in the vicinity. *'Abbas* sewn with gold thread are only worn on *'Id* days or when calling on important women.

Umm Raugella—The black cotton cloth worn over the hair and hanging down over the neck of the *thaub*, consisting of four pieces joined together.

Milfa—A straight piece of transparent black cotton cloth used to cover the face of town women, and worn by Badawins in the north to hide the lower part of their face.

*Burqa** (locally pronounced *Burqa*)—The black *jezz* (coarse silk) mask with slits for the eyes worn by all Badawin women south of Kuwait and in Najd proper. It hangs down over the mouth and neck, and is kept in place by three cords, two round the head and one round the neck. A well-made *burqa* is very becoming and shows the eyes off to great advantage.

A somewhat long form of *burqa* is worn by Mutair, Harb, *'Utaiba*, Sbei, Rashaïda, Bani Khalid, Beni Hajir and *'Awazim* women. (Speak-

* On the island of Failaka the women wear a stiff cloth mask known as *basilla*. The same is also seen on the Trucial Coast of Oman (see sketch).

Veils and Masks

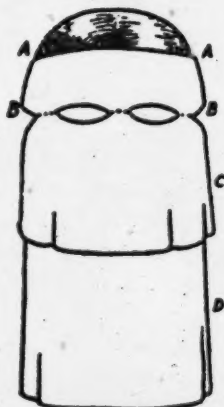
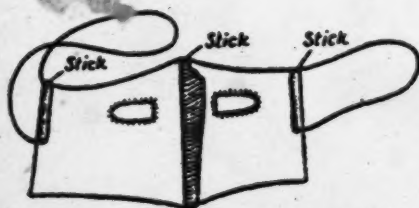
Chap. IX

ing generally, by tribal women of east and central Arabia.) The ^B29/ ^k29/ 'Ajman women, on the other hand, wear a shorter form which ends just below the chin: some sections also sew a tiny stick, vertical fashion, into it on the centre of the forehead. The 'Ajman usually make their *burgas* of a sort of black mercerised cotton or shiny silk. The 'Ajman fashion is followed by the Murra, the Manasir and to a modified extent by the Badawin women of the Trucial Coast.

The northern Badawin never cover their women's faces with the *burqa* (or double cloth mask with eye-holes) as is done further south. All that is required is that a thin black veil (*milfa*) be drawn across the

BURQA

BATŪLA



The Burqa is bound round the head by continuous cords at A and B. C gives a double thickness to veil D which stretches up under C as far as eye-line.

lower features and mouth. Speaking very generally, Badawin women south of a line Akaba-Kuwait wear the *burqa*, those north* of that line cover the lower part of their faces only.

Zilba—A long coat opening right down the front. (Worn only by wealthy women of the town).

Babing—A black cotton head-dress worn by girl children on holidays and festivals up to the age of twelve or thirteen years. It fits tightly under the chin and has its edge embroidered in gold thread round

* This statement is not quite correct as the Shammar, some of the Hijaz tribes, the 'Utaiha, south of the line do not wear *burgas*, and I understand that certain tribes in the North-West, notably the Bani Sakhr, Hawaitat, Bani Aniya, do not even wear the *milfa*.

The Salubba of course never wear the *burqa*, but at most the *milfa*; more often than not their faces are wholly unveiled.

Jewellery

Chap. IX

B
291
K
291

the face and down the front, or sometimes with a cheaper gold braid which is sewn on.

Women in the desert make most of their own clothes; they possess no scissors or thread, but tear up the cloth (using teeth) and sew with thread taken out of the cloth. Their usual scale of measurement is from thumb to first finger extended and from eye corner to eye corner (outer edge).

The year 1935 saw the fashion introduced among town ladies of Kuwait only of *saujar* or short knickers in place of the *sirwal* trouser for women. The word is a corruption from our word "soldier", and the pattern of the *saujar* is based on the khaki shorts worn by our troops in tropical countries.

WOMEN'S JEWELLERY

B
301
K
301

The list given below includes articles of jewellery worn by both town ladies and Badawin women. Wahhabi influence inhibits the use of gold among the Badawin. Their ornaments therefore are of silver only. Those articles marked with an asterisk (*) are not worn among the Badawin. See coloured plates between pp. 640-641.

Ring for little finger is known as *khamṣar* } silver (or gold) ring set with large
Ring for third finger is known as *wasat* } square or oval turquoise stone.
Rings, thin, in silver or plain gold (three in number) for second finger are known as *al mardni*.

One silver ring on forefinger with large square turquoise setting called *al shāhid*, is worn only by well-to-do women.

Bracelets of large amber beads—*ḥasir*—are universally worn. Mixed coloured bead bracelets are known as *dalag*.

Bracelets of large red coral lumps—*mirjās*—are particularly fashionable among Dhafir women.

A collar of small coloured beads with five chain metal drops in front—*ma'ainna*—is very popular with 'Ajman, Mutair and Dhafir women.

Nose-ring—*ḥaḍma*, small gold, or silver with two pearls and two turquoise.

Nose-ring—*fraida*, large-size universally fashionable among the Badawin.

It also has pearl and turquoise mountings like the smaller nose-ring.

**Zard*—Gold medallion picked out in turquoise worn in middle of neck. (Very common among Muntafiq women.)

**Khashil*—Necklace made of gold coins of varying sizes called *sankh* in Kuwait.

291



THE SISTER OF SHAIKH FAISAL AL DUWISH
OF THE MUTAIR

page 160b

Exclamations

Chap. IX

PRETTY CUSTOMS AND EXPRESSIONS AMONG WOMEN

(a) *Expressions of astonishment* (at seeing or hearing something startling).

Ya kabdi kabda—Oh! my liver. (Especially 'Ajman women.)

Ya galbi galba—My heart of hearts. ('Ajman women.)

Yummah!—Oh Mother!

Ybbah!—Oh Father!

Men have one very common expression, "Allāh" pronounced with a long drawl on the final "a". This when they have seen or heard something really surprising or wonderful.

(b) *Expressions of affection.*

Ba'ad aini aini—Oh my eyes, my eyes.

Ba'ad galbi galbi—My heart, my heart.

Ba'ad ruhi ruhi—My soul, my soul.

(c) *Woman's expression of impatience.*

Ya waili waila—E.g. "Come here Nura, the English lady wants to speak to you, why don't you hurry you foolish one, *ya waili waila*, what is the matter with you!"

(d) When the head of the house, or a son, returns from a long journey or from the pearl-banks, the woman of the house hangs up on a pole, with a cross-piece to it, one of her best and most brilliantly coloured *thaubs*. Among townswomen, this is hung up on the roof of the house, for the world to see. In the case of Badawin women in the desert the *pōlē* is placed in front of the tent. This custom is almost similar to that observed when an important shaikh or personage is expected to arrive at or pass a camp, and the Badawin ladies desire to show him welcome.

The custom is known as *raiya*t.

(e) Another pretty custom is to show to a guest at a tent, or big man passing by and staying for coffee, a baby that is just born, when for luck he gives into its little hand a rupee or riyal.

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

The statement often made that a bride never shows her face to her Arab husband is not exactly correct. As often as not the husband forcibly

Sex Indulgence

Chap. IX

834 removes the *burqa* or mask from his bride's face on the first night.
●291 She invariably tries to keep it on for about ten days or so out of modesty. His Majesty Bin Sa'ud, however, told the writer that he had had, he supposed, some four hundred wives during his life, but had never seen the face of any one of them. He presumably referred to his many Badawin brides, whom he married usually for a night or two, and then divorced them. This is a custom common among important shaikhs, and involves no disgrace at all to the girl or to the man. Should a child result from these one-or-two-night marriages, the 586 shaikh or big man gives the mother a salary till the child is four or five years old, and then the child is taken away from the mother and placed in the father's house. During this nursing period the mother must not marry. If she does, the child is at once taken away and given to a wet nurse. The Al Sa'ud, Al Subah, Al Khalifah princes regularly go in for such alliances among their Badawin subjects, but usually take away at an early age any children that may be born.

515 Both man and woman must have a complete bath after sexual 833 intercourse. This is a precept of religion, and the wildest Badawin must conform to this rule. Even though only a small bowl of water may be available, the whole body must be washed all over.*

841 During her monthly periods a woman is forbidden to have inter- 515 course with her husband for full seven days. When the menstrual period is over, a woman is unclean until she washes all over; this is called "washing her hair" (*ghussal al ras*).†

833 During Ramadhan (the annual thirty-day fast) sexual intercourse is forbidden by day, but not by night.

It is no exaggeration to say that sexual intercourse is loved by the ordinary Arab above all pleasures in the world. It is the one ~~great~~ pleasure common to rich and poor alike, and the one moment of forgetfulness in his daily round of troubles and hardships that Badawin or townsman can enjoy. Men and women equally love the act, which is said to keep man young, "just like riding a mare".

The Arab seems to possess strength above the average for sexual

* Prayer of a woman after sexual intercourse when performing ablutions:
A sali ala Muhammad wa ali Muhammad nuwaid aghail an il janabi fi hadha al ma al jari kurbit 'Illah is'ali.

† When a girl reaches womanhood, she is said to be "Now washing her head".



A MUTAIRI SHAIKH'S DAUGHTER AND FRIEND OF OURS
(A well-known beauty carefully disguised)

page 192 a

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TWO RASHAÏDA LASSES UNVEILED AND
READY FOR AN 'ID DANCE

page 224b.

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SHAIKH RIDDAN AL SŪR OF THE MUTAIR
(A notable 'Ikhwan leader)

page 256 a.

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JUNAIFIR BIN HAWAILA OF THE 'AJMÂN

page 256 b

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SHAIKH MUHAMMAD AL BADR AL DUWISH
(One of the chief Mutair leaders)

page 288 b

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SBEI TRIBESMEN WATERING CAMELS AT SUBAIHIYAH

page 384 d.

Origin of the Sulubba

Chap. XL1

565 In cast of countenance they would appear to be definitely non-
619 Arab, and have none of the pronounced Semitic features of the latter.

[142] In areas like Kuwait and Zubair, where they always maintain a
[361] large permanent camp outside the city walls, they are sometimes
taken by Europeans for ordinary Badawin. This is a bad mistake and
leads at times to awkward situations.

582 No Arab can marry a Sulubba girl. He would be killed by his
595 people if he did, and she also. Nevertheless, I have heard it said that
the Amir Fawaz of the Ruwala has no compunction in taking a pretty
Sulubba maiden into the desert and keeping her as his mistress. For
this he is roundly cursed by all good Badawin.

622 Most Sulubba settlements have their headmen, but where they are
565 in strength among the major tribes of Arabia they have their shaikhs,
619 some of whom own large flocks and herds of camels and are up to a
point highly respected.

For instance:

Shaikh Hamad ibn Shennut is the Shaikh of the Mutair Sulubba.
Shaikh Mutallij al Safi is the Shaikh of the Shammar Sulubba.
Shaikh Muhammad ibn Jilad is the Shaikh of the Amarat Sulubba.
Shaikh Ma'aithif is the Shaikh of the Ruwala Sulubba.

● 291 The Sulubba women never veil and rarely wear a *milfa* over the
lower part of their faces. Hence in Najd they are at once recognisable.

535 They are very fond of dancing, and on any feast day or at a mar-
riage ceremony, the first thing they do is to organise a dance. This
takes the form of men and women dancing together (a highly dis-
graceful and unseemly thing among Arabs), at which the men every
now and then kiss their partners on the mouth and before the audience.

619 The Sulubba has among his ceremonies, dances, etc., the strange
custom of hoisting a cross made from two pieces of wood tied to-
gether in the form of a Christian emblem. It may be called his tribal
mark or standard.

565 Well-read Arabs, like Shaikh 'Abdullah Salim al Subah, cousin of
619 the Shaikh of Kuwait, and others, say quite definitely that the Sulubba
174 are descendants of the large number of Crusader camp followers, who
were taken captive during the Crusade and Saracen wars; that vast
numbers of these camp followers were taken in several great battles

Good-looking Shepherd Girls

Chap. XLV

tussle with them in the old war days when I held charge of the Suq 721
al Shuyukh and Nasriyah areas. All are good fighters and of tough 713
breed, and all carry the very latest type of rifle or carbine with an
abundance of ammunition.

The shepherd tribes leave the Euphrates about the 15th October 221
of each year, and provided early rains (warm) have fallen in the 233
southern desert, move slowly south grazing on the new green shoots
and drinking from rain pools or *khabras* which, owing to the rock
formation of the subsoil almost everywhere in North-East Arabia,
sometimes lie for weeks before drying up.

During February and March the shepherd tribes cover the whole 462
of the area lying to the south and west of Kuwait, and quite one of 484
the pleasantest features of Kuwait life at this time of the year is to
meet the large number of pretty shepherd lasses who are to be seen
laughing happily and wending their way along the roads which
converge on to the town.

These girls are usually accompanied by droves of small donkeys [432]
laden to the ground with curdled milk in skins, wool and firewood
which they bring into Kuwait to sell, or again in the evening taking
home their daily purchases of food, brightly coloured cloth, etc.

They are a very happy community and as a rule prefer to travel
without their men folk, who stay with the tents or tend the flocks.

These *Hukra* lasses, as they are locally called, all go unveiled in [291]
contrast to the Kuwait Badawin women. Being for the most part
pretty and good looking, they usually have a crowd of town youths
buzzing round the spot where they congregate to sell their wares.
Like most of their sisters nearer home, they can drive the shrewdest of
bargains, and give as good as they get in verbal exchanges.

The women with babies either carry them on their backs on the [854]
march, or tuck them into a saddle-bag thrown across a donkey's
back. The wee faces peering out just above the edge of the roomy
bag are a most comical sight.

In general appearance these shepherd girls, like their men folk,
are strong and lusty, and rarely ride their donkeys. They walk twelve
to fifteen miles a day when visiting Kuwait, and on the same day in
the evening return some six or seven miles out of the town, sleep
on the side of the road when dark falls, and at dawn continue their

Appendix I

About half of the Mutair took part in the rebellion against Bin Sa'ud in 1929-30 under Faisal al Duwish. The other half remained loyal under 721
ibn Musaiyis, ibn Shuqair and others. The fortunes of the tribe suffered a temporary eclipse when the rebellion was put down, but it should not be long before it recovers its former strength.

The Mutair are well armed with modern rifles, mostly Turkish and 713
German Mauser carbines with a sprinkling of .303 supplied by Bin Sa'ud, and though partially disarmed by Bin Sa'ud after the rebellion of 1929-30 have already largely replaced shortages.

Ammunition to-day appears to be scarce, but this is because it is Bin Sa'ud's policy to keep his tribes short of this commodity, until there is need for a general issue.

During the 'Ikhwan movement, the Mutair became the most fanatical and best of Bin Sa'ud's fighters. With the collapse of the movement they, like the 'Ajman and 'Awazim, have gone back to their old love and would like to come under Kuwait, from whom Bin Sa'ud managed to entice them away on the death of Mubarak, the great Ruler of Kuwait.

Sullen hostility to Bin Sa'ud is to-day (1937) marked in spite of the 669
latter's treating the Mutair well. The chief cause of the present hatred dates from the rebellion of 1929-30 and its aftermath, and may be summed up in the following:

- (a) The imprisonment of Faisal al Duwish and death of their beloved leader in Riyadh.
- (b) The confiscation by Bin Sa'ud of their almost sacred herd of camels known as the *Shuraf*.

The best-known characteristic of the tribe is the capacity for being able 726
to deliver a surprise attack from a far-distant base. As an individual the Mutairi is manly and brave but inclined to be sullen. He is not good in defence. The tribe breed mainly horses and camels and a few sheep. They 231
own the famous breed of *Krush* horses, and up to the 1929-30 rebellion could probably put six hundred horsemen into the field. The women wear 291
a black hanging soft *burga* over their faces of attractive appearance, and 562
once satisfied of a guest's credentials will allow him to mix freely with them. This is one of the pleasing traits they are proud of.

The Shammar and Dhafir are the chief enemies of the Mutair. The 'Ajman 619
were formerly hostile, but their recent alliance (1929-30) has healed the breach of the past, at any rate for the time being, and marriages between the two tribes are not uncommon.

'Ajman (Singular 'Ajmi)

Paramount Shaikh—IBN HITHLAIN* (from Shaikhly Clan AL MA'IDH, 619
subsection NAJIAN). 101
622

* Is also pronounced Hithlain.

Appendix I

713 *Arms.*—The tribe is particularly well armed with modern rifles, the majority of the men having the Turkish mauser, while the long .303, short .303, German mauser, and Turkish cavalry mauser are to be found. The British short .303 is not popular, it being considered too clumsy for horse-men to carry.

Ammunition appears to be fairly plentiful, but in wartime would be the first supply to fail. No doubt Bin Sa'ud would remedy this by a general issue. The 'Ajman look upon the 'Awazim, the other powerful tribe in Hasa, as their hereditary serfs, but Bin Sa'ud has given the latter the status of an independent tribe. Great enmity exists to-day between the two communities in consequence.

619 The best-known characteristics of the 'Ajman are:

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- (a) Their hot-headedness in attack, which is liable to get them into difficulties.
- (b) Their loyalty to each other. "Touch one and touch all" may be called their motto.
- (c) Their remarkable propensity for chattering. They love a joke.

231 The tribe breeds large numbers of camels and a few horses, but practically no sheep.

342 Their tents are usually black or brown, the side pieces and inner partitions having several broad white horizontal stripes in the centre, peculiar to themselves. 'Ajman women cover their faces with a shiny cloth mask of rather unattractive appearance as opposed to the black hanging *burqa* of the Mutair, 'Awazim and Rashaidah, which looks well.

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609 The individuals of the tribe are hospitable to strangers, and the women, like the Mutair, will mix freely with guests, once the preliminary suspicious feelings are removed. They very much dislike their women going into the towns, however.

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619 The 'Ajman look upon the Dhafir perhaps as their principal enemies, but are also hostile traditionally to Mutair, Shammar, Sbei, and Sahul tribes.

721 In the 1929-30 'Ikhwan rebellion against Bin Sa'ud about half of the 'Ajman allied themselves with the Mutair, half remained staunch.

In the same rebellion the 'Ajman, though camped close to the Kuwait border, carried out several daring and successful long-distance raids to the vicinity of Riyadh and Hufuf, both distant three hundred and fifty miles from their base, proving their well-known talent and capacity for distant forays. In one of these raids the Shaikh of the Al Misra section (ibn 'Uthain) destroyed fourteen of Bin Sa'ud's cars in the Dahana between Riyadh and Hufuf.

641 The 'Ajman, with the collapse of the 'Ikhwan movement, may be said to be sullenly hostile to Bin Sa'ud, and the northern sections would like to

12: Giubb

G-3

(1930-1946) 1948

MG1 Jordan
Bedouins MS4



A Bedouin shaikh's set of coffee pots

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25. Theodor T-3 (1944-47) 1948 MJI Saudi Arabia
Roderick M34

192

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P. 394 (A)

25: Thesiger T-3 (1944-47) 1949

MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Bedouin MJ4

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P 396 (A)

[CAPTION APPEARS ON P. 396 (B). ANALYST]

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(Above) One of the small black Arab tents pitched near Manwakh well. This type belongs exclusively to sand-dwelling tribes and is never used on the steppes or plateaux. Beside the tent stands its owner, who wears the long pointed sleeves of a Western Arab; in front, placed upside-down, is a leather trough from which his camels are watered. Round the Manwakh encampment romped Arab children, a hardy lot: even in winter months, when the desert cold is intense, the little girls wear (left) only a fringe round their hips. The children are fed mainly on camels' milk and horridge or bread made of millet sown from the more sedentary sections of the Sa'ar tribe.

P 396 (B)

25: Thesiger T-3 (1944-47) 1949

MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Bedouin MJ4

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Abdallah Bin Nura, Sheikh of the Bin Ma'aruf, plaits a rope for use at Maswakh well. Bedu sheiks do not think it beneath their dignity to help with watering and other everyday tasks

P 398 (A)

401 camels to draw up the water, but the southern
 312 Bedu always lift it by hand. They fasten a
 571 leather bucket, holding about four gallons, to
 415 either end of the rope which runs over the
 461 pulley, so that as one bucket is drawn up full
 the other descends empty. Men and women
 draw together on the well-ropes, four or five
 to each rope, singing in chorus as they work.
 233 We had not been here long before the camel
 herds arrived and the serious work of watering
 began. Great leather troughs supported on
 crossed wooden hoops were set up by each
 family around the well. Soon there was no
 room for more watering parties, and late-
 comers had to wait their turn. The buckets
 rose and fell and were tipped into the troughs
 about which the thirsty camels pushed and
 thrust while their calves frolicked around.
 Shouting herdboys, stripped to the waist, ran
 in and out among them, driving away camels
 which did not belong to them, and restraining
 the more impatient of their own. Others
 scratched the hind-quarters of their favourite
 beasts, while they sang them their watering
 songs to induce them to drink deep. When
 they had drunk they were couched nearby, to
 be watered again later in the day, before
 being driven back to pasturage. Round the
 well-mouth women filled their water-skins,
 which then lay swollen and quivering upon
 the ground, guarded from the trampling feet
 of the camels by shrill-voiced little girls, clad
 only in a leather fringe around their waists.
 562 Few of the women were veiled and all joined
 freely in the constant jests and laughter.
 Among them was a tall girl of startling
 beauty. She had come down to the well early
 in the day, carrying a water-skin and accom-
 panied by her young sister. The centre of a
 happy laughing group of lads, she dallied
 here till the evening.

574 A family of Sa'ar from off the mountains
 291 were camped under an overhanging cliff
 171 nearby, and they bade us join them and drink
 67 coffee. Kinsmen of the Bin Ma'aruf, they yet
 differed from them in their dress and way of
 life. They wore indigo-dyed loincloths and
 wraps around their shoulders, as is the fashion
 among the Southern Bedu, whereas the Bin
 Ma'aruf were clad like the Northern Arabs in
 long white shirts whose pointed sleeves fell
 nearly to the ground. They were returning
 to their homes in Raidat al Sa'ar, a two days'
 journey to the south. Flood crops of sorghum
 and beans are grown there in a shallow valley,
 guarded by numerous stone-built forts and
 watch-towers, which look out across the deso-
 late rocky plateau. Raidat is seldom visited
 by other Arabs, for it is the very stronghold of
 the Sa'ar, who have an evil reputation for

typography
 100 (A)
 F.

221 camps move to the Euphrates, or on to the main groups of wells around which cluster tented towns of hundreds of families, odd Sulubba families will remain far out in the desert, [312] drinking from some tiny water hole in a lonely ravine known only to the Sulubba themselves. There they will live almost the lives of wild animals, with only a few sheep or donkeys, hunting gazelle and often dressing in their skins.

224 The Sulubba alone knows the wild animal life [262] of the desert intimately. As a gazelle hunter, 290 his skill is incredible, and many live very large- 463 ly on gazelle meat and dress in their skins. The Beduins often employ the Sulubba as guides in the desert or consult them regarding routes, grazing, or camping grounds.

433 Apart from hunting gazelle, and menial work 251 for the Beduins, the Sulubba also live by grazing and breeding animals. Some of them are prosperous and own large flocks of sheep. They have a few camels, but their most distinctive possessions are the white asses. Probably the Sulubba originally bred asses rather than camels for riding purposes, because if they had any good camels the Beduins were likely to covet them. But since no Beduin would stoop to ride an ass, the Sulubba were left in undisputed possession. Some of these animals have marvellously swift paces, and are almost as capable of resisting thirst as is the camel.

721 During the last ten years, the desert belong- 178 ing to Iraq, Syria, and Trans-Jordan has been brought under Government control. As a result the Beduins are no longer able to bully the Sulubba quite as unrestrainedly as before and the latter are learning to complain to the police when they are beaten or abused.

563 In 1919-22, the recrudescence of Wahhabism 797 in central Arabia produced a tremendous outburst 721

ML1 Yemen ML1

U-3 (no date) 1942

4: Sergeant

Beduin M34



Norman Lewis

(Left) Tribesman from the coastal region of the Yemen. (Right) Yemen beduin, with eyelids darkened with antimony powder (kohl)

p.70 (A)

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